1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

286 The weaving of cloth is, as has already been said, now almost extinct in Zongu; in Lingthem only a couple of women—the wives of Datoop and Jiroong—weave at all regularly. Lepcha cloths are extremely finely woven; nearly all are in striped patterns, sometimes over a plain, and sometimes over a patterned background. I have been shown such cloths further ornamented with needlework embroidery, but I did not see any so enhanced in Zongu. Although weaving is now almost a lost art, the spindle is considered the [562] typical feminine symbol, as the arrow is the masculine one; and in stories the heavy bar of the loom is the woman's chief weapon.

301 Although no attempt is made to add 'beauty' to the ordinary objects and surroundings of life, both men and women wear a certain amount of jewellery. The men wear turquoise ear-rings and rings, the women heavy and elaborate necklaces of big and usually unworked semi-precious stones, often with a charm-box of fretted gold or silver inlaid with turquoise and coral suspended from them, and also occasionally brooches and bracelets; but all these jewels [556] are bought ready-made. They are considered to enhance the beauty of the wearer; they are also a display of wealth and the only possible form of investment. Young people occasionally display a certain amount of coquetry in their dress, but the effect is usually unfortu- [515] nately marred for the stranger owing to the Lepchas' habit of not washing their bodies.

iv

342 Nowadays new houses are built very rarely. According to Chala Mandal—the head of the village of Lingthem, and also of the smaller village of Panung to the east with ten houses, and Lik-lyang (five houses) Salim and Safo (three houses each) on the other side of the Talung river—only four new houses have been built in the ● [592] present century. Ordinarily the members of a Lepcha household do not separate, but if the family gets too numerous, or if brothers, either real or classificatory, do not agree, the household will split and the land be divided and the younger brother will build a house of his own. Three of the four new houses—those of Ongden, Kurma and Nahyeun—were built for this reason. In the case of the fourth house—that of Katel—the situation was more complicated 342 and irregular. Katel, a man from a village on the far side of Zongu, 592 married a woman of Lingthem, an orphan who had been brought up in the Mandal's house, and took her home to his village. But

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Mrs. Katel[7] was both unhappy and unpopular in her husband's community, and ran away for refuge to the Mandal who had brought her up. Her husband Katel followed her, and asked the Mandal's permission to settle in Lingthem; this was given and he was provided with land on which to build a house and which he could clear for cultivation. During the period when these four houses were built an equal number fell into decay either through family lines dying out, or through households amalgamating. Thus Tobgé, a young married man, all of whose family had died, had abandoned his house to go and live with Jiroong, who was his father's youngest brother.

According to the oldest inhabitants the number of houses increased very greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ninety-year-old Serving, who was almost in his dotage, said that when he was a child there were only four houses in Lingthem; and Kahlyeu, born in 1860, says that in his childhood there were about twelve households. Kahlyeu ascribes the increase to the fact that in those days families were larger and split up as the sons grew older; but it seems probable that the indirect pacification after 1860 made possible a considerable increase in the number of permanently settled inhabitants.

According to Kahlyeu—and the tradition is supported by others—until about the beginning of the seventeenth century the Lepchas were entirely nomadic, only building temporary mud huts, and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and the wild plants, of which the Lepchas have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every tree and plant. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say in the first half of the eighteenth

[7] Some objection may be taken to my referring to married women as Mrs. X. Among the Lepchas married women are never named, and there are three different methods of referring to them: mother of A, wife of B, or woman from C, that order representing the frequency of usage. Thus Mrs. Tafoor is usually called Chimpet-mu (mother of Chimpet, her eldest son), less often Tafoor-veu (wife of Tafoor), or Panung-mu (woman from Panung). 'Mother of A' seems to me unnecessarily confusing, and since, in nine cases out of ten, a married woman owes her presence in the community to the fact that she is married to her husband, I have found it most convenient consistently to refer to married women as 'wife of X', or, in the English form 'Mrs. X', since this term seems to me to approach nearest to the cultural reality.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

vi

With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes overlarge the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapön*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[9] *Youmi* and *gyapön* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of sons the biggest fields will be split in two. Should two or more brothers wish to continue to live together they will be given adjoining fields. In recent years there has only been one such division; Ongden and his two brothers separated during their father's life-time.

An example of the working of the joint family can be given from Tafoor's household. This, the biggest in the village, consists of fifteen people: the second Dorjé Lapoon, the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's dead father, and his newly-married wife Pumri who was formerly his aunt: Tafoor, his wife and four children; Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, with his wife and three children; Prumtu, a fifteen-year-old half-sister of Tafoor; and a distantly related celibate lama. The whole household work together on the temporary fields, of which only one of each sort is cleared each year. Beyond a few animals, the second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife own no property; it would not be seemly for him to do so as a revered Dorjé Lapoon. Tafoor and Chudo have separate rice and cardamum fields and animals; but the produce, though kept separate, is taken in approximately equal quantities for household consumption. They share in the payment of the taxes and the liquidation of the debt left by their dead father; the rest of the cardamum money each spends as he thinks fit. Though there is only six years difference in their age they act and appear as if they were of different generations; Tafoor is notably serious and responsible, Chudo rather childish and always joking. The second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife are treated as honoured guests and have no responsibilities; Mrs. Tafoor fills the rôle of 'housemother', saving the sowing seed and giving out the stores to be cooked, Mrs. Chudo that of 'youngest daughter-in-law', doing the cooking and making herself useful.

Land can only be owned by men; in the event of a woman or group of women being left sole possessors of a property they must acquire, either by marriage or adoption, a male who can inherit the property. Some childless couples adopt a son (*kup-tsop*—literally a substitute child) to look after them in their old age and to be their heir. In nearly all cases such adopted sons are the children of near relations.[10] Should a person die without heirs or should the heirs be too young to work the property a *ké-tsop* (a word formed on the analogy of *kup-tsop*, a substitute tax-payer) will

[10] Further details about adoption will be found in Chapter VI, p. 177.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

be appointed by the Mandal; for the purpose he will choose the younger son of a large family. If there are no direct heirs the *ké-tsop* will keep the property permanently; if the heirs are infants he will hand over the property when the boy is big enough to work the land himself. In such a case during his guardianship the *ké-tsop* will be responsible for the payment of the taxes; he works the land and supports the ward, but can keep for himself any profit he can make. He receives no other fee for his services. To give an example, Ongden's eldest son was acting as *ké-tsop* to Kahlyeu; Kahlyeu, who is getting on to eighty, is too old to work the land, and his only surviving grandson Chélé is too young. I asked if there was any possibility in such a case of a *ké-tsop* trying to claim the land permanently and was told that such behaviour was absolutely unthinkable. Indeed the idea was so grotesque that it was treated as a good joke. 428

In the case of a childless couple the *ké-tsop* keeps the property permanently. When a rich and childless couple grow old there is occasionally a certain amount of intrigue by parents to get their child adopted by them; but this is always done indirectly and through intermediaries; it would be shameless for parents to offer their own children for adoption. A year ago an old couple died in Lingthem whose only children were two daughters who were married in other villages; during their lifetime the old people did not want to adopt a boy and struggled alone to pay their taxes and work their fields; after they died the Mandal and *youmi* decided that Pichi, the second son of Datoop, should be made *ké-tsop*. The married daughters took all the movable property and animals between them; Pichi only got the house and land, and his father had to pay for the funeral expenses of the old couple. This property now belongs to Pichi and his descendants for perpetuity; he and his younger brother and his parents have moved into this house, leaving the old house and property to Datoop's eldest married son Pembu. The houses and fields are at some distance from one another. 428 597

If the household consists of more than a single married couple and one child, the dependent members of the household usually have a little private property of their own, in the form of a few animals and small portions of rice terraces and cardamum fields. When children achieve physical independence they are given their own clothes and knife or sickle and usually a wooden cup; and usually at about the same time a baby chicken or kid or piglet. [592] 422

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

597 adopted as children five show very considerable deviance from the Lepcha norm; Takneum *youmi* is bad-tempered, especially with children (it will be remembered that he was the man who twice committed sodomy); Kurma has a desire for power, is boastful, and shows decided sadistic traits; Rigya is a horder who gloats over his hidden wealth; Agyung is surly and very rude and heartless towards his elders, and especially to his adopting father Serving, who is ninety and nearly blind; and Gongyop is extremely nervous. The sixth adopted adult, Chelim, appeared to me to be a normal and well-adjusted Lepcha; I did not have much contact with him and was unable to get his life-story.

885 The Lepcha manner of life is arranged on the supposition that birth and death will take place regularly and at the proper times; and when these suppositions are falsified by fact, readjustments, which often result in maladjustments, have to be made. The Lepchas plan for big households of four generations with the chief authority in the third generation; a man is thought to be in the prime of life and to be capable of exercising authority chiefly in his fourth and fifth cycles—that is between the ages of thirty-six and sixty. Before the age of about thirty-six Lepcha men are extremely un-self-reliant and diffident; they act as though they were unused to making decisions for themselves, almost as though they were not fully grown-up. Among the Lepchas I nearly always considerably under-estimated people's ages. After the age of sixty a man should be able to retire somewhat from the harder labours of life to be supported by his children and grandchildren.

183 Such is the ideal; but sterility and a very unevenly distributed
●592 death-rate destroy these expectations; old men find they have to work either because they have no sons, or else their sons are dead; children who should be living in a large family find themselves isolated. The ideal Lepcha household would consist of about sixteen people; in Lingthem the average is a little over five to a house. Only six households are relatively complete, and of these only two, the households of Tafoor and Ongden, are considered by other Lepchas to approach the ideal arrangement.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

this is done the husband and wife must each carry away their own image and throw it into the forest. The cost of this service is either Rs. 3 a head or enough grain for two months. This ceremony, however, only postpones the ill-luck for two or three years, after which it must be repeated.

As can be seen, these spaced visits are carefully arranged to make the bride's severance from her family as gentle as possible. It is only very exceptionally, as in the case of Nariya described above, that after the marriage ceremony the bride will refuse to return to her husband's house. It is also worth noting that until well after the ceremony the parents of the children being married play no rôle whatsoever.

The marriage feast represents very considerable expense—if everything had to be bought somewhere between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300; for most people this entails saving up for a couple of years. Nearly everybody who can provides this feast; in the case of very poor people general contributions will be made such as were outlined in Chapter Six.[7] In the case of a *komok myok*—that is a man living with his wife's family and taking the place of the non-existent son—the feast is very much smaller and is chiefly provided by the girl's family.

iv

The newly married girl is likely to find herself in a somewhat subservient position; it is her task to do the cooking and most of the household chores under the direction of the 'house mother', who is almost always her mother-in-law. She also has to maintain constantly respectful behaviour towards her father-in-law and the other men—her husband's elder brothers and her husband's father's brothers if they live in the house—who are so classified. If her husband is not the youngest brother she will only have this subservient position until the younger brothers marry; then their wives in their turn will occupy the position of youngest daughter-in-law and have to do the greater part of the household work. There is usually considerable friendliness between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; the daughter-in-law is taking a lot of work off her mother-in-law's shoulders and in return the mother-in-law instructs her and cajoles her to keep her happy.

There is no bar on the girl paying relatively frequent visits to her parents; she need not necessarily be accompanied by her

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 156.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

husband, but can take as companion any other member of her husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these visits are the means of producing further marriages between the groups.

The husband practically does not change status at all through marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young, and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accustomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked preference for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is stigmatised as shameless.

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become more important; now they are really part of the village and are carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen. The father and mother are called after their child—father of X and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional. But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the household; they continue working harder than ever now they have children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son, even possibly having the property registered in this son's name;

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

592 then the son is responsible for the taxes and the management of the household and his father and mother almost assume the rôles of honoured and leisured guests. At this period his sons in their turn will probably be getting married and he has to make the necessary economies for their marriage expenses; then his wife too will become a 'house mother' and will have the work taken off her by her younger sisters-in-law and daughters-in-law. Some younger brothers never achieve the position of house father; all their life until they are too old the position will be held by their elder brother and then when the elder brother wishes to retire it is probable that the younger brother will be about the same age and will prefer to hand over the work and responsibility to his nephew. If, however, there is considerable discrepancy in the ages of the two brothers the elder brother will hand over the management of the property to his younger brother, who will then in his turn re-transfer it to his elder brother's eldest son. Theoretically there are some advantages in being house father as the house father has control of the crops and their proceeds; but in point of fact there are more duties than advantages; the house father has to look ahead for future expenses and to make provision against them; he has to take what few decisions need to be taken; he has responsibilities but relatively very few rights, for if he started abusing his position, say taking all the money and grain for himself and his family and neglecting his dependants, either there would be a public scandal or the family would break up. The younger brothers would demand and get their share of all land and property so that the house father would be left alone with very diminished resources and would probably find considerable difficulty in getting the necessary help for the work in his fields and so on.

Such a gradual evolution and development is the ideal pattern of Lepcha life, but owing to the high incidence of sterility and a very uneven death-rate few people attain even a near approximation to it. As has already been explained[1] if the first wife is sterile it is permissible to take a second wife from the same family group as the first, but not every man has the money or inclination to do this, and there is no guarantee that the second wife will be fertile. It is said that in the majority of cases the first wife welcomes the arrival of a 'younger sister' as this will considerably lessen her work; it is not, however, unknown for co-wives to quarrel.

Perhaps the least disruptive death is that of the wife; after a year's

[1] See Chapter Six, pp. 166–169.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Perhaps the least disruptive death is that of the wife, after all years 592 [765]
obligatory mourning the husband can re-marry. But a dead man is irreplaceable, and it is the death of men which destroys the expectations of the Lepchas. Thus Patek by the deaths of his father and grandfather was left the head of a household of six at the age of seventeen, and Tobgé was left alone with a wife and a young child at the age of twenty. Tobgé's case, however, was less desperate, for he was able to abandon his lonely home and go to live with Jiroong, his father's younger brother, who had previously been a *komok myok* and had therefore a separate establishment of his own.

At the other end of the scale there is old Kahlyeu who had two 592 888
wives and twelve children; but all his sons died young and his daughters married away; and so at the age of seventy-seven, instead of living a life of ease, supported by his children and grandchildren, he has to work hard and lives alone with his grandson Chélé and the middle-aged widow of one of his brother's sons. His brother's family is settled in a distant village some way away. Kahlyeu is a rather melancholy, unhappy old man, but one of the shrewdest in the village. 'Times have changed', he complained once to me when I was asking about earlier conditions, 'since I was a boy; nowadays the youngsters know more than I do, and if I start telling them about the old times they rebuke me saying: "Why talk about that? It is all over and done with."' Similarly ninety-year-old Serving, almost completely in his dotage, without teeth and half-blind, has survived all his descendants and nearly all the members of his *ptso*, a century ago the most important in Lingthem; now he lives with the grandson of his elder brother, a rude and ungracious man, with his wife and baby son. Death, which has been so unmerciful in taking the young men has been equally unmerciful in letting these old lonely and unhappy men survive.

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

(δ) PLAN OF THE VILLAGE OF LINGTHEM

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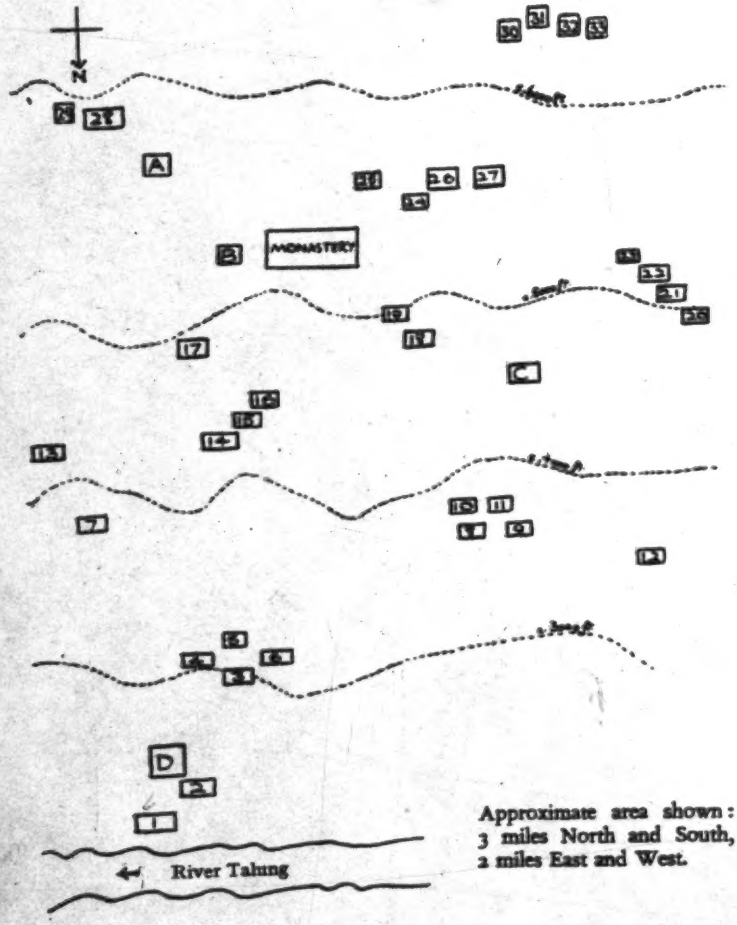
The accompanying plan shows schematically the distribution of houses in Lingthem. They are all situated on the northern slope of the mountain rising steeply from the River Talung. The numbers are for reference to the accompanying table of householders. B is the house of the monastery guardian. A, C and D are field-houses permanently inhabited by part of the household.



Approximate area shown: 3 miles North and South, 2 miles East and West.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

592
621

TABLE IV

LIST OF HOUSEHOLDERS

(arranged by PTSO (patrilineal clan) and showing composition of household)

House number on plan	*Householder*	*Members of household*			
		Adults		*Children*[1]	
		M	*F*	*M*	*F*
JAMYONG PTSO					
3	CHALA MANDAL	3	2	–	1
4	Chano	1	1	3	1
12	Asang	2	3	2	2
16	Chinya	2	1	–	–
18	Kahlyeu	1	1	1	–
23	Aga	1	3	1	2
27	Nariya	2	2	–	–
29	Ongden	3	2	2	3
30	Ashyok	3	2	–	–
31	Chelim	1	2	1	1
33	Tingkep	2	2	2	–
ZUMCHYONG PTSO					
9	Nahyeun	1	1	–	–
17	Tafoor	3	3	3	3
25	Kaji	2	2	–	–
28	Dunbi	1	1	–	1
32	Takneum	2	3	3	–
TAMSANG PTSO					
5	Thyak Thimbu	2	2	–	–
6	Gongyop	4	2	–	–
11	Zumba	2	2	–	–
PAKI PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
1	Kurma	2	1	–	1
22	Také	3	2	–	–
SAKMI PTSO					
10	Pembu	1	1	1	–
21	Datoop	2	1	1	–
A	First Dorjé Lapoon	2	–	–	–
ARAM PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
19	Tempa	1	2	–	2
20	Patek	2	4	1	–
B	Pongring	1	–	–	–

[1] By children are here understood unmarried men under twenty.

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592 ●
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House number on plan	*Householder*	*Members of household*			
		Adults		*Children*[1]	
		M	*F*	*M*	*F*
ARAM PANDJET PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
7	Takal	1	1	–	–
26	Lumba	2	2	–	–
C	Lumba's elder wife	–	1	1	–
DEMIK PTSO					
13	Katel	1	2	1	1
KALONG KANDONG PTSO					
2	Songpo	1	1	–	–
D	Nakleup (son of Songpo)	1	1	–	–
LUBDONG RABJI PTSO					
8	Pargeut	1	2	1	4
TAKPO PTSO					
14	Tobgé (has left house to live with Jiroong)				
24	Jiroong	2	2	1	2
TSELTELIM PTSO					
15	Serving	2	1	1	–

[1] By children are here understood unmarried men under twenty.

[p. 462 is blank]